

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6585

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USDOCOSOUTH

USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCUSAFE

COMSIXTHFLT

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 9307

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, GR, TU

SUBJECT: ANNOUNCED AREA OF OPERATIONS FOR THE SISMIK

REF: A) IZMIR 272 (NOTAL) B) ANKARA 6698 (NOTAL)

1. AS OF THIS AFTERNOON (THURSDAY), THE GREEK PRESS HAS NOT REPORTED THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE NOTICE TO MARINERS WHICH GIVES THE COORDINATES FOR THE AREAS IN WHICH THE SISMIK WILL OPERATE DURING THE FOURTH PHASE OF ITS OPERATIONS (REF A). THE GREEK PRESS TODAY ANNOUNCES THE SAILING YESTERDAY (SEPTEMBER 1) OF THE SISMIK FROM IZMIR FOR RESEARCH OPERATIONS UNTIL SEPTEMBER 25. IT IS GENERALLY REPORTED  
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THAT THE SISMIK WILL OPERATE IN AREAS TO THE SOUTH AND IN

THE GENERAL VICINITY OF THE DODECANESE ISLANDS (RATHER THAN THE CENTRAL AEGEAN AREA DESCRIBED IN REFTELS), AND THAT IT IS NOT EXPECTED TO GO INTO CONTROVERSIAL OR DISPUTED AREAS. ALL PAPERS MENTION THAT THE SISMIK HAS BEEN PAINTED "DEEP RED" SO THAT "IT CAN BE SEEN MORE EASILY." THEY ALSO INDICATE THAT THE SISMIK IS LIKELY TO COVER IN THIS PHASE AREAS PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED FOR TWO MORE VOYAGES (FOR A TOTAL OF SIX) AND THAT THUS THIS COULD BE THE FINAL VOYAGE.

2. ONE NEWSPAPER, PRO-GOVERNMENT KATHIMERINI, WHILE MENTIONING THAT INFORMATION CONCERNING THE AREAS OF OPERATION OF THE SISMIK IS UNCLEAR, REPORTS THAT AN INITIAL ANALYSIS OF INCOMPLETE INFORMATION CIRCULATING IN ANKARA SUGGESTS THE SISMIK WILL OPERATE IN AN AREA SOUTHEAST OF THASSOS; SOUTH OF MOUNT ATHOS IN HALKIDIKI; EAST OF THE SPORADES ISLANDS; WEST OF IKARIA, CHIOS AND LESVOS; AND EAST OF LIMNOS AND WEST OF SAMOTHRACE (I.E. THE AREA DESCRIBED IN THE NOTICE TO MARINERS, REF A). THUS, WE CAN EXPECT THAT THE AREA OF SISMIK'S CURRENT OPERATIONS WILL SOON BECOME KNOWN PUBLICLY AND WILL LEAD TO A STRONG REACTION IN THE GREEK PRESS AND GENERALLY. THE GREEKS WILL VIEW THE OPERATIONS OF THE SISMIK IN THIS CENTRAL AEGEAN AREA AS THE WORST POSSIBLE PROVOCATION AND DEMONSTRATION OF TURKISH BAD FAITH, ESPECIALLY AS IT COMES AT A TIME WHEN EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO ARRANGE FOR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS PURSUANT TO THE RECENT UN SECURITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF THE DISPUTE.

3. ALTHOUGH THE GREEK PRESS HAS NOT YET PICKED UP THIS STORY, HIGH OFFICIALS OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT ARE AWARE THAT THE CURRENT PHASE OF SISMIK'S OPERATIONS WILL BE IN THE CENTRAL AEGEAN AND ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE, ALTHOUGH SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NOT OFFICIAL GOG STATEMENT OR COMMENT. EMBASSY ANKARA HAS CORRECTLY POINTED OUT (REF B) THAT THE AREA OUTLINED BY THE NOTICE TO MARINERS IS MUCH LARGER THAN ANY OF THE THREE AREAS IN WHICH THE SISMIK HAS OPERATED SO FAR. MOREOVER, NOT ONLY DOES IT ENCOMPASS MUCH OF THE CNTRAL AEGEAN, INCLUDING SUBSTANTIAL AREAS WHICH THE GOG CONSIDERS TO BE GREEK CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTINENTAL SHELF, BUT THE LIMITS OF THE AREA ARE VERY CLOSE INDEED TO SEVERAL ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE AREAS, SUCH AS THE ISLAND OF THASSOS WHERE GREEK OIL EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES ARE UNDERWAY, AND AT ONE POINT ALMOST TOUCH ON THE GREEK MAINLAND (NEAR MOUNT ATHOS). THE GREEKS HAVE BEEN ARGUING THAT THE TURKS ARE CLAIMING THAT THE ANATOLIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF EXTENDS PRACTICALLY TO THE EASTERN SHORES OF EUBOEIA. THE AREA OF SIMIK'S CURRENT OPERATIONS WILL

CONFIRM THIS FEAR.

4. ALL THE ABOVE POINTS TO THE REAL DANGER THAT THE FOURTH PHASE OF THE SISMIK'S OPERATIONS, IN THE AREA DESCRIBED IN THE NOTICE TO MARINERS REPORTED BY REF A, CAN BE EXPECTED TO LEAD TO RENEWAL OF GREEK-TURKISH TENSIONS. THE ANNOUNCED PERIOD OF THE OPERATIONS, SEPTEMBER 1-25, IN ITSELF WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY PUT OFF THE POSSIBILITY OF A BITSIOS-CAGLAYANGIL MEETING BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH. MOREOVER, PASOK LEADER PAPANDREOU CAN BE EXPECTED TO POINT TO THIS LATEST TURKISH PROVOCATION AS PROOF THAT THE MODERATE, PEACEFUL APPROACH WHICH PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS HAS BEEN FOLLOWING WITH RESPECT TO THE AEGEAN DISPUTE IS A FAILURE AND SHOULD BE ABANDONED. PAPANDREOU, AND OTHERS WHO MAY PICK UP THIS LINE OF ATTACK AGAINST CARAMANLIS, WILL FIND A RECEPTIVE AUDIENCE AMONG MANY IN THE GREEK MILITARY AND THE GREEK PUBLIC, IN GENERAL, WHO HAVE FELT THAT THE ONLY WAY TO DEAL WITH TURKISH PROVOCATIONS AND THREATS AGAINST GREEK NATIONAL INTERESTS IS TO RESPOND WITH FORCE.

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